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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001201

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON
IO/PSC FOR JEAN CLARK AND ERIC CROWE
TREASURY FOR OFAC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER KTFN SO
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRESIDENT SHARIF URGES ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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Summary and Action Request

¶1. (C) On June 14, at the request of Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President Sharif and the Ambassador spoke by telephone about recent events in Somalia. President Sharif thanked the Ambassador for USG efforts and contributions that were instrumental to the TFG's success in severely damaging the enemy. He said security forces are planning to launch a significant operation in the near future, though they had not yet received all the equipment they were expecting from Uganda. Sharif initiated the call to make two main points. First, to ask that the US and the international community honor their pledges of support for the TFG. Second, that the US consider de-listing the money remittance company al-Barakaat so that frozen assets can be utilized to support the government. Sharif also argued that the removal of one entity would substantially support the TFG's outreach efforts, and would further isolate entities like al-Shabaab, which would remain listed.

¶2. (C) Action Requested: We recommend that al-Barakaat be removed from domestic sanctions under E.O. 13224.

Increased Support Will Help Us Conclude the War

¶3. (C) At the request of TFG President Sheikh Sharif, the Ambassador spoke with the President by telephone the evening of June 14. President Sharif began the conversation by stating, "All is well," and that contrary to concerns that the interim unity government would be swept away, it remains intact. The TFG President said success in recent security operations is directly attributable to U.S. efforts and financial support. While the "enemy still has life," Sharif reported that recent fighting has severely damaged the TFG's opponents and the TFG is preparing a significant operation to take advantage of recent victories. Sharif said the TFG is planning to launch the attack, even without all the equipment and ammunition it had hoped to receive from Uganda.

¶4. (C) Sharif said the first main objective of his call was to discuss the U.S. pledge of support for the TFG. The TFG President was thankful for the U.S. assistance provided to

date, and urged the continued fulfillment of our pledge of USD 10 million for the Somalia National Security Force. He said that if the international community immediately honors its pledges, "we can quickly conclude the war." (Note: We understood that President Sharif was referring to the pledges for the TFG security forces made at the April 22-23 Brussels donors conference). President Sharif explained that the government urgently needs these resources to obtain the necessary weaponry to outgun its violent opposition. If the funds are not provided, it will be hard to manage the situation, he said.

¶ 15. (C) The Ambassador responded that the USG is fully in support of TFG and that we will continue to provide significant financial and materiel assistance to the transitional government. However, Ambassador Ranneberger emphasized that there are several steps the TFG must now undertake to ensure accountability. He reminded President Sharif that we are still waiting for the list of commanders and security forces to enable us to help pay the salaries over the next few months. The Ambassador emphasized that we understand the urgency of all partners respecting their pledges and will do everything we can to continue to encourage the quick release of funds from the international community.

Reconciliation Through
De-listing al-Barakaat

¶ 16. (C) President Sharif then proceeded to the second point

NAIROBI 00001201 002 OF 002

of his call - a request to consider de-listing the al-Barakaat money transfer company. (Note: This was the first time President Sharif has mentioned the issue of al-Barakaat to us directly). Sharif told the Ambassador that to date, the TFG has achieved considerable successes in outreach, meeting with influential elders, clan leaders, and significant figures in all regions of the country. He stated that "blacklisting" and the asset freeze on al-Barakaat affects thousands of Somalis who could be encouraged to better support the government. (Note: Al-Barakaat, its owner Ahmed Nur Ali Jumale, and related entities were designated on November 7, 2001 as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists" under E.O. 13224).

¶ 17. (C) Sharif argued that de-listing al-Barakaat and releasing the assets would create much goodwill toward the U.S. and allow the funds to be used to support ongoing reconciliation efforts. The TFG President reasoned that the general population would be able to see positive results of supporting peace and turning away from violence and terrorist activities. He said that by de-listing one entity, it would further marginalize other organizations like al-Shabaab, which would remain listed.

¶ 18. (C) The Ambassador cautioned that the de-listing process is complex. However, he promised to explore the issue with Washington.

¶ 19. (C) President Sharif asked the Ambassador to convey his greeting to Secretary Clinton. President Sharif said he wanted to thank the Secretary for her recent contact and for all of the support provided by the USG. President Sharif concluded, "We will not lose this opportunity - we are adamant that we will succeed in our efforts."

RANNEBERGER